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ABSTRACT

Instruction in using the library and its tools is assessed in this report, which explores the effectiveness of course-integrated bibliographic instruction for graduate students. When a search of the ERIC database and a request for information from LOEX (Library Orientation and Instruction Exchange) yielded few sources, the literature pertaining to different types of bibliographic instruction and graduate students was analyzed. This report cites examples of bibliographic instruction programs at colleges and universities to illustrate the most frequently used instructional methods, which are: (1) course-integrated bibliographic instruction, in which a unit on library skills forms a distinct part of a specific course, or in which bibliographic instruction is integrated into the overall objective of a course; (2) bibliographic instruction seminars and workshops that meet outside regularly scheduled classes; (3) specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines, i.e., programs specifically tailored to a student's course of study, which are sometimes referred to as research methods courses and which may carry graduate credit hours; and (4) individualized instruction, which may take the form of term paper counseling or one-on-one work between librarian and student. It is concluded that course-related instruction is the least effective method to use with graduate students, and that any of the other more individualized methods is probably more effective. (SD)

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL: A STUDY OF METHODS

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Introduction

Bibliographic instruction is the natural marriage of librarianship and curriculum. According to LOEX, a clearinghouse for bibliographic instruction information, teaching the use of the library and its tools is an essential service of all media skills centers and libraries. LOEX and ERIC were the resources for this writer's study of the feasibility of course-integrated bibliographic instruction for graduate students. The study, which resulted in this paper, identified four major methods of bibliographic instruction. These methods are not pure - there is a great deal of overlap among them. Also, the methods vary in effectiveness.

This paper uses examples of bibliographic instruction programs to illustrate the most frequently used bibliographic instruction methods. The paper concludes with a recommendation that course-integrated bibliographic instruction not be used at the graduate level.

In an academic library, the librarian's goal is to teach the student to become an independent researcher (Penhale & Taylor, 1986). Attaining this goal is the essence of bibliographic instruction. The methods of bibliographic instruction will vary according to the type of library and the sophistication of the library user. Obviously, public libraries should not format bibliographic instruction programs the way high school or academic libraries do. Less obvious is the fact that bibliographic instruction for college freshmen should differ from bibliographic

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instruction for graduate students because of the greater academic maturity and sophistication of graduate students (Griffin & Clarke, 1972).

The most impersonal method of bibliographic instruction is the recorded library tour, which is structured like a tour of a museum or zoo. The general library tour guided by a library staff member is slightly less impersonal. As bibliographic instruction becomes more specialized, it becomes more personal, involves fewer people, and is more specific to the individual's research needs. The ultimate in bibliographic instruction occurs when a researcher and a librarian consult on a one-to-one basis about a specific research problem. This is the most time-consuming method of bibliographic instruction, but it has proven to be the most effective one, particularly with mature researchers (Lipow, 1976).

Literature and Methodology

In September 1988, two department heads at the University of North Florida's Thomas G. Carpenter Library decided to explore the feasibility of course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level. One department head did an ERIC literature search while the other contacted LOEX.

LOEX stands for Library Orientation and Instruction Exchange and is the national clearinghouse for bibliographic instruction information and materials. Located at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, LOEX collects information on bibliographic instruction from all types of libraries and disseminates it to interested parties in order to eliminate duplication of effort through resource sharing. A telephone call to LOEX requesting information about course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level resulted in delivery of a bibliography and a package of articles on bibliographic instruction at that level. While LOEX director Teresa Mensching also sent examples of undergraduate course-integrated bibliographic instruction programs, her cover letter stated that

she found no information on course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level. Mensching noted, however, that librarians do not always report successful bibliographic instruction programs and few librarians document unsuccessful programs.

An automated search of the ERIC database through DIALOG confirmed Mensching's conclusion. The search terms bibliographic instruction or library instruction with graduate students produced 14 journal articles and seven ERIC documents. Eight of the journal articles also appeared in the bibliography sent from LOEX. The search terms bibliographic instruction or library instruction with course-integrated produced about 60 articles and 30 documents. Bibliographic instruction or library instruction with graduate students and course-integrated yielded nothing.

Most of the articles pertaining to graduate students were scrutinized by this writer. General articles on course-integrated bibliographic instruction provided background information. From this literature, a pattern of four methods of bibliographic instruction emerged. As noted above, the methods are not distinct but overlap one another. Several of the methods appear to be more applicable to graduate students than the course-integrated method of bibliographic instruction.

Methods of Bibliographic Instruction

The four major methods of bibliographic instruction are 1) course-integrated bibliographic instruction, 2) the bibliographic instruction seminar and the closely related bibliographic instruction workshop, 3) specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines, and 4) individualized bibliographic instruction. A bibliographic instruction program in an academic library usually consists of a combination of these methods.

Method 1, course-integrated bibliographic instruction, has two formats. In one format, a unit on library skills forms a distinct part of a specific course. In the other format, bibliographic instruction competencies are integrated into the overall objectives of a course. Course-integrated bibliographic instruction may include any combination of orientation tours, audiovisual presentations, instruction in research skills, term paper counseling, and exercises with pretests and posttests (Kohl & Wilson, 1986).

The course-integrated method of bibliographic instruction is the kingpin of library instruction (Dowell, 1986). An excellent example of this method occurs at North Texas State University (NTSU). Journalism students at NTSU are required to attend two class meetings in the library. After the first library meeting, each student journalist is assigned a person whom they must research in the library. Students present their findings at the second library meeting. Further assignments build on this exercise. The program has proved effective with undergraduate students (Dowell, 1986).

The effectiveness of course-integrated bibliographic instruction programs varies. A successful course-integrated bibliographic instruction program has the following characteristics: 1) the program stresses research strategies and tool selection rather than details of specific indices and catalogues (Kohl & Wilson); 2) there is a high level of cooperation between the librarian and the faculty member in developing and implementing the program (Michalak, 1976); and 3) the library and librarian involved have a long-term commitment to planning, evaluating, and improving, the program (D.M. Jones, personal communication, September 9, 1988).

Method 2, the bibliographic instruction seminar, uses the same approaches (tours, counseling, presentations, exercises, and tests) as course-integrated

bibliographic instruction. The difference is that the instruction is not presented during a regularly scheduled class but in a seminar session or series of sessions. These seminar sessions may be scheduled for nights or weekends. There may be a registration fee.

A bibliographic instruction seminar is very similar to a bibliographic instruction workshop and a library mini-course. Van Pulis (1981) and Bradigan, Kroll, & Sims (1987) distinguish the seminar approach from the workshop approach and the mini-course approach. For this study, however, the seminar approach, the workshop approach, and the mini-course approach are similar enough to be considered one method. In a national survey conducted by LOEX in the late 1970's, one-third of the responding libraries reported using the seminar or workshop method of bibliographic instruction, but the survey did not distinguish between these approaches (Van Pulis, 1981).

Librarians at the University of Colorado, Boulder and Ohio State University have employed this method of bibliographic instruction. At the University of Colorado, Boulder (UCB), librarians used the bibliographic instruction seminar method with graduate students from 1981 to 1984. Presented several times during these years, the seminars were named The Graduate Researcher and consisted of a series of one-and-a-half to two hour sessions on weekday evenings. Initially, the cost of the seminar was $12.00 to $15.00. Each evening's session focused on one theme, such as the Library of Congress classification system, style and research guides, or accessing periodicals.

Reports written by the UCB librarians illustrate the varying degrees of success of this method. Students who attended the series of sessions in the first seminars rated them as interesting, relevant, and effective; however, attendance was below the expected level. The next seminar was cancelled because of lack of

interest. The UCB librarians continued refining the format of the seminar over several years. The Spring 1984 seminar was declared successful. The librarians concluded that students responded best to free sessions in the early evening (6:30 - 8:30) that were well-publicized and provided time for individual consultation with a librarian (Fink, 1984).

Librarians at Ohio State University Libraries (OSU) experienced success in a variation of the seminar method of bibliographic instruction which they called the workshop approach to bibliographic instruction. Over a period of four years, OSU librarians presented approximately twelve workshops for graduate students. In these workshops, students used the bibliographic tools of their disciplines and followed a detailed plan to develop their own research paths. From 20 to 50 students participated in each workshop. Feedback indicated that participants preferred workshops or bibliographic instruction seminars that were geared to their disciplines. To accommodate this preference with large numbers of students, the OSU librarians redesigned the workshops around broad subject areas including the arts and humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences (Bradigan et al, 1987).

The experience at Ohio State University leads directly to method 3, specialized bibliographic instruction within a discipline. In this method, graduate students take bibliographic instruction courses that are specifically tailored to their disciplines. Often called research courses or research methods courses, these bibliographic instruction courses carry graduate credit hours and may be required. The courses may be taught by librarians, departmental faculty members, or a team including both. This method of bibliographic instruction has been successful with medical students and graduate students in education, engineering, sociology, psychology, and business (T. Mensching, personal communication,

September 26, 1988).

The literature on bibliographic instruction and graduate students contains several examples of this method. Queens College in Flushing, New York, and Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., both reported successful use of specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines with graduate students in education. At Queens College, graduate students in education must successfully complete a six hour research seminar. Librarians at Queens College have tested several bibliographic instruction methods. Working with the education faculty, they have determined that the best way to help students in research methods courses is through "live lecture incorporating 'hands-on' experiences" (Clayton & Nordstrom, 1987).

At Catholic University, graduate students in education have three levels of bibliographic instruction in their discipline. At the first level, librarians work with education faculty members on the course syllabus for Introduction to Educational Research. Librarians also prepare bibliographies and meet with students. At the seminar level, librarians work with professors on course objectives and assignments. They tailor bibliographies in specialty areas of education according to students' needs. At the thesis or dissertation level, students are matched with a librarian who becomes a member of the team organizing the student's educational experience (Pickert & Chwalek, 1984).

Another example of specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines is found at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, where the medical library offers six hours of elective credit for library research courses. As a librarian there, this writer participated in these specialized bibliographic instruction courses from 1978 to 1981. Two courses were offered as electives for third (final) year medical students. The first was a highly-structured three hour

course in which one or two medical students working with one librarian were taught the intricacies of medical library research over a period of one week. In the second three-hour course, the medical students spent a week using the strategies they had learned in the first week to research a topic of their own choosing. Each student was assigned to a librarian and consulted with this librarian several times a day. Although formal evaluation of these courses was shallow, the writer's personal recollections of the experience are positive. Students who had taken the courses to avoid more strenuous work said they learned more than they had expected, would be able to apply the acquired knowledge, and enjoyed the experience.

Method 4, is individualized bibliographic instruction. Many of the examples of the other three bibliographic instruction methods have individualized components. Term paper counseling is a component of course-integrated bibliographic instruction (Kohl & Wilson, 1986). Individual consultation with a librarian was a feature of successful bibliographic instruction seminars (Fink, 1984). In the examples of specialized bibliographic instruction, students were matched with a librarian for individualized instruction (Pickert & Chwalek, 1984). These are examples of bibliographic instruction programs that are individualized to the student.

Another way of approaching individualized bibliographic instruction is through subject specialist librarians. In this approach, a librarian with a degree in another discipline serves as a bibliographic specialist for that discipline. The librarian delivers individualized services to academic departments from a subject specialist's perspective. Michalak (1976) suggests that subject specialist librarians can link libraries to academic departments by establishing a professional relationship with individual faculty members. This relationship can begin with the

librarian serving on the search committee that hires a faculty member and can continue with the librarian offering individualized orientation programs for new faculty members, course-integrated bibliographic instruction, and current awareness services in individual faculty members' research areas.

Indiana University (IU) uses individualized bibliographic instruction with students at the graduate level. At IU, new graduate students in the departments of economics and political science attend two day library orientation programs. Subject specialist librarians then contact each graduate student. The librarians become the links between the graduate students, the academic departments, and the library (Michalak, 1976). In an article describing individualized bibliographic instruction at IU, Michalak (1976) does not mention the academic credentials of the subject specialists librarians who participate in this program.

The examples described above illustrate bibliographic instruction methods more clearly than descriptions of the methods. The examples also show that the methods are not distinct. Each of the methods involves some type of library seminar or workshop program, method 2. Method 3, specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines, is often a refinement of method 2. Individualized bibliographic instruction, method 4, is embedded in each example. As stated earlier, there were no examples of course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level, but the example of course-integrated bibliographic instruction in an undergraduate journalism class illustrates this method.

The four major methods of bibliographic instruction in academic libraries (course-integrated bibliographic instruction, bibliographic instruction seminars, specialized bibliographic instruction within disciplines, and individualized bibliographic instruction) have common components. No method stands alone. Any bibliographic instruction program usually consists of a combination of

methods. The categorized methods presented here are perhaps arbitrary. Bibliographic instruction methods cannot and should not be isolated and pigeonholed. The value of making a nominal distinction between methods lies in demonstrating how bibliographic instruction ranges from the impersonal to the highly individualized. Here one returns to the original question of the feasibility of using course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that course-integrated bibliographic instruction is not the best method of approaching bibliographic instruction at the graduate level. The primary basis for this conclusion is provided by the experiences of the libraries cited above showing that graduate students need more individualized bibliographic instruction than the course-integrated bibliographic instruction method can supply.

Students making the transition from high school to college are still finding their way. They need general bibliographic instruction in a specific library, and course-integrated bibliographic instruction is the most practical method for this purpose because it allows the librarian to instruct large numbers of students.

As college students mature academically, however, their library needs change. By the time they become graduate students, they have become researchers who presumably already have acquired general knowledge of library resources, and, as researchers, now need more individualized instruction. More precisely, graduate students need specific bibliographic instruction that can be generalized to any academic library but is individualized to their specific research needs.

Course-integrated bibliographic instruction is the least individualized of the four bibliographic instruction methods. Therefore, any one of the three remaining

bibliographic instruction methods is probably more effective than course-integrated bibliographic instruction at the graduate level. But regardless of the method used, some components from all the other methods may apply.

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